



GENERAL INFORMATION

FISHING TOURNAMENTS

As a voluntary program, fishing event organizers are strongly urged to use the Tournament web site at fw.ky.gov/tournamentschedule.aspx to register and report on their events. Tournament planners can avoid space conflicts with other previously registered events by adjusting the date, time, specific launch areas or weigh-in site for their activities.

Other recreational anglers and boaters can check the web site to see when and where fishing events are scheduled. This will assist them in planning their activities and also help avoid potential space conflicts. Additional permits may be required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the U.S. Forest Service.

If the launch site for your tournament involves using a marina ramp, please contact the marina operator before scheduling your tournament.

There are an estimated 800 - 1,000 fishing tournaments held annually in Kentucky waters. These can be a valuable source of information to our fishery biologists. Following each scheduled event, tournament organizers are asked

to report their catch data directly on the tournament web site or on forms which can be sent via postal mail. Voluntary cooperation from tournament organizers will be used in making fishery management decisions. At the end of the tournament season a summary of tournament results will be sent to all providers. If not provided with one, contact your local fisheries district office. They will provide a packet.

Bigger tournaments

Fishing tournaments involving 100 or more boats are regulated and scheduled by the Division of Law Enforcement, 1-800-858-1549.

CATCH AND RELEASE

The KDFWR supports catch and release of fish not needed for the table. **Releasing fish in a healthy state is an excellent conservation tool to maintain quality fishing opportunities.**

When releasing a fish, keep the fish in the water as much as possible. Do

not allow the fish to flop in the boat or on the ground; the use of a net will assist you in controlling the fish. Gently handle the fish with wet hands and do not squeeze the fish or touch the gill or eye areas. Trout are better immobilized if held upside down. Black bass are easier to handle if held by the lower jaw. Remove hooks quickly using needle-nosed pliers. Deeply hooked fish should be released by clipping the line close to the mouth – don't attempt to remove the hook. Sliding the fish back and forth through the water a few times will help it to become reoriented, and sometimes aids in its recovery.

Striped Bass: Adult striped bass are highly susceptible to delayed mortality following their release, even though these fish may initially appear in good condition. This is particularly a problem when water temperatures exceed 70 degrees. It is best not to release legal sized striped bass during this time.

A study reports that live-bait anglers can increase striped bass survival (12 fold) by using non-offset circle hooks (sizes 9/0 and 10/0). These hooks are available from major hook manufacturers, but are generally used by saltwater anglers.

Smaller sized circle hooks from size

1 to size 3/0 work well for other species the angler plans to release such as Cumberland River rainbow trout in the 15 to 20-inch slot limit. Live bait anglers who pursue black bass would increase survival by using similar sized circle hooks. Anglers must resist setting the hook and simply reel and tighten the line. The fish will hook itself in the top or corner of the mouth with gentle pressure. Hook setting pulls the circle hook from the fish's mouth.

LITTERING

(KRS 433.757)

Littering is not only unsightly, but is harmful to humans and wildlife. Fishing line should be discarded in the trash or at a recycling center, not in or around bodies of water. Discarded fishing line may be hazardous to wildlife and the lower unit of boats. Animals may be ensnared in the line and lose appendages or die. Fishing line caught in a prop shaft may cause seal leaks and lower unit failure. Anglers, unfortunately, are often the biggest litter bugs. These actions cast a bad light on all anglers. Littering in or around any public waterway is against the law. Please be responsible.



Raise money for your conservation project with a Commission Conservation Permit!



Any incorporated nonprofit wildlife conservation organization or club can apply for a Commission Conservation Permit (Special Permit) in writing by submitting a conservation project proposal. Awarded permits can then be sold to raise money for the project.

The Commission may award up to ten quota elk hunting permits, ten deer permits, ten turkey, ten waterfowl and ten trout hunting/fishing permits each year. Applicants may apply for one special permit per species.



For application details, visit fw.ky.gov and click on "Commissioner's Office." The deadline is May 1.

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

The Kentucky Departments for Environmental Protection, Health Services and Fish and Wildlife Resources jointly issue a fish consumption advisory to the public when fish are found contaminated. Trace contaminants such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) and chlordane are found in some fish in Kentucky. An advisory cautions people about potential health problems that may result from eating fish caught from a particular area. An advisory does not ban eating fish; it is a guide to reduce your risk. This guide provides information on how often fish may be safely eaten. Most fish are healthy to eat and are an excellent source of low-fat protein.

REDUCE YOUR RISK

Risks from eating contaminated fish can be reduced by the following:

- fillet the fish, remove the skin and trim all fat
- do not eat fish eggs
- broil, grill or bake the fillets instead of frying or microwaving
- do not eat or reuse juices or fats that cook out of the fish.

STATEWIDE

All waters are under advisory for mercury. Women of childbearing age and children 6 years of age or younger should eat no more than one meal per week of freshwater fish. Adult men and other women are not included in the consumption notice.

This is not an emergency as organic mercury can occur naturally in the environment and does not affect swimmers, skiers or boaters. Fish can accumulate low levels of mercury by eating plankton and other small aquatic creatures.

DRAKES CREEK Simpson/Warren County

All fish from dam on W. Fork at Franklin, Ky. downstream to confluence with Barren River. (PCB)

GREEN RIVER LAKE

Carp and channel catfish. (PCB)

Special population

Women of childbearing age, children 6 years of age or younger, pregnant and nursing women and women who plan to become pregnant should follow the advisories in the "Special Population" category.

KNOX CREEK Pike County

From the Virginia/Kentucky state line to the Tug Fork River, a consumption advisory for the general population and a special population of women of childbearing age and children has been issued for this section of Knox Creek. See table on page 21. (PCB and mercury)

LEVISA FORK RIVER including Fishtrap Lake Pike County

From the Virginia/Kentucky state line to Fishtrap Lake dam, a consumption advisory for the general population and a special population of women of childbearing age and children has been issued for this section of the Levisa Fork River including all of Fishtrap Lake in Pike County. See table on page 21. (PCB and mercury)

LITTLE BAYOU CREEK

All fish from section of creek located in McCracken County. (PCB)

METROPOLIS LAKE McCracken County

No more than one meal per month of fish should be eaten. (PCB and mercury)

MUD RIVER Logan, Butler and Muhlenberg counties

From Hancock Lake Dam to Wolf Lick Creek (Logan County): Fish that feed on the bottom such as catfish, carp, suckers and freshwater drum should not be eaten. Game fish species such as black bass, sunfish and crappie may be eaten, but not more than one meal per month. Women of childbearing age and children should not eat any bottom-feeding fish

from this segment of Mud River, but may eat six meals per year of game fish from this segment of Mud River. (PCB)

From Wolf Lick Creek to the Green River (Butler and Muhlenberg counties)

Fish that feed on the bottom such as catfish, carp, suckers and freshwater drum may be eaten, but not more than one meal per month. Game fish species such as black bass, sunfish and crappie may be eaten, but not more than one meal per week. Women of childbearing age and children should not eat more than six

PARASITES AND GRUBS IN FISH

Kentucky anglers will occasionally clean a fish and find a white or yellowish color worm in the fish's flesh that is about the size of a grain of rice. Or, when stream fishing, an angler will encounter a smallmouth bass or sunfish with small black specks on its belly or across its body.

This is a parasitic fluke that requires different host animals to complete its life cycle: a fish eating bird, a snail and a fish. The grub matures and produces eggs inside a host fish-eating bird such as a Great Blue Heron. The eggs enter the water from the bird's droppings or from its mouth. The eggs hatch and tiny larvae of the parasite burrow into a snail. After a time in the snail, the parasite changes form and swims to its next host, a fish. Inside the fish, the parasite changes to a grub form and waits for the fish to be eaten. Then, the cycle repeats.

The angler's first instinct is to discard any fish with either the grubs in the flesh or black specks on the body. Grub-infested fish are safe to eat. Grubs do not infect people. Remove any grubs found and prepare the fish as you normally would.

meals per year of bottom-feeding fish in this segment of Mud River, but may eat one meal per month of game fish from this segment of Mud River. (PCB)

OHIO RIVER, LEVISA FORK AND KNOX CREEK

A new method for reporting fish con-

sumption advisories has been adopted. Consumption rates for specific fish have been developed based on a meal of 1/2 pound of fish (before cooking) eaten by a 150-pound individual. Following these guidelines and spacing your meals of those fish species will limit your health risks by reducing your total

exposure. See table below.

TOWN BRANCH Logan County

Fish should not be consumed from any portion of Town Branch. This includes all species and sizes. (PCB)

NUMBER OF MEALS PER SPECIES	General Population	Special Population
LEVISA FORK RIVER (including Fishtrap Lake)		
Channel catfish, drum, white bass and suckers/carp	1/month	6/year
Black bass* and flathead catfish	1/week	1/month
KNOX CREEK		
Flathead catfish	No consumption	
Channel catfish and drum	6/year	No consumption
Black bass*, crappie and rock bass	1/month	6/year
OHIO RIVER, UPPER REACH (mouth of the Big Sandy River to Markland L&D)		
Channel catfish over 21" and paddlefish (and their eggs)	6/year	No consumption
Carp, channel catfish under 21", drum, hybrid striped bass, smallmouth buffalo and white bass	1/month	6/year
Black bass*, flathead catfish and sauger	1/week	1/month
White crappie	unlimited	1/week
OHIO RIVER, MIDDLE REACH (Markland L&D to Cannelton L&D)		
Channel catfish over 21" and paddlefish (and their eggs)	6/year	No consumption
Carp, channel catfish under 21", drum, hybrid striped bass and white bass	1/month	6/year
Black bass*, flathead catfish and sauger	1/week	1/month
OHIO RIVER, LOWER REACH (Cannelton L&D to mouth of Ohio River)		
Paddlefish (and their eggs)	6/year	No consumption
Blue catfish over 14", channel catfish, carp, drum, hybrid striped bass and white bass	1/month	6/year
Blue catfish under 14", bigmouth buffalo, black bass* and sauger	1/week	1/month

*Black bass include largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass.

Need fish

for your new or renovated pond? Visit fw.ky.gov or call 1-800-858-1549 for information about Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's farm pond stocking program.

Q: If I have my pond stocked by the KDFWR, do I have to let the public fish it?

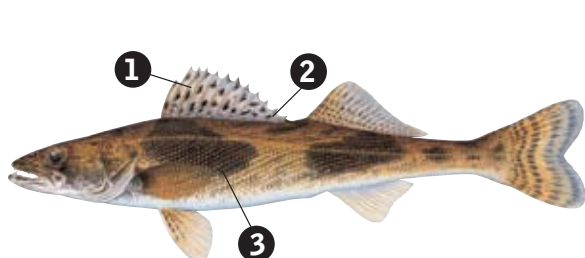
A: No. The deadline to apply for the pond stocking program is September 1 annually and there is a fee.

"takemefishing"

TAKEMEFISHING.ORG

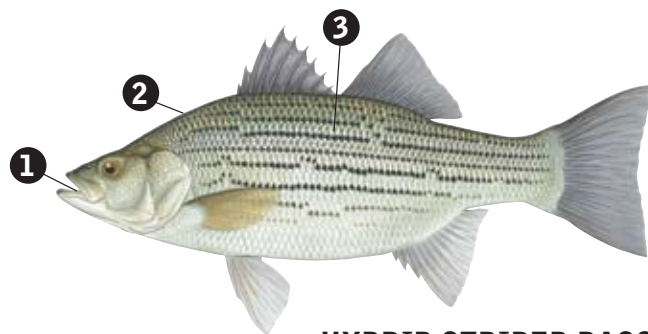
The Angler's Legacy program aims to mobilize the 7.5 million avid anglers in the United States to "take someone fishing." The program intends to pass the angling legacy down to the next generation. Take the pledge by logging on to www.anglerslegacy.org to take a child, friend, co-worker or relative on a fishing trip.

ANGLER'S FISH IDENTIFICATION GUIDE



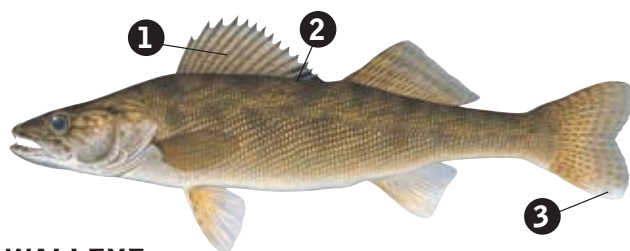
SAUGER

1. Rows of dark spots on spiny dorsal fin, 2. No dark blotch at rear of spiny dorsal fin, 3. Dark saddle-like blotches which extend onto the sides of the body



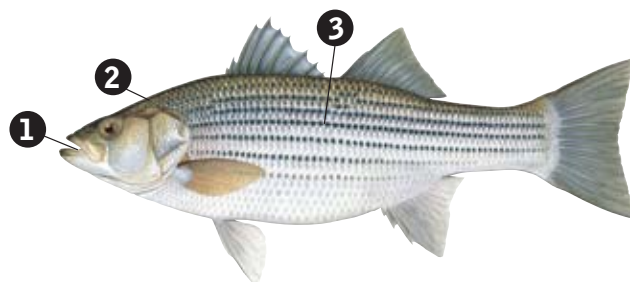
HYBRID STRIPED BASS

1. Tooth patch on tongue consists of two rows of teeth, often partially joined, 2. Back moderately arched, 3. Most stripes are broken, many more than once



WALLEYE

1. Dark streaks or blotches on spiny dorsal fin, but not distinct spots, 2. Dark blotch at rear of spiny, dorsal fin, 3. White spot on lower lobe of tail fin



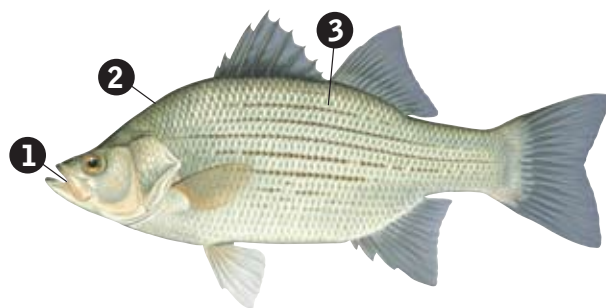
STRIPED BASS

1. Tooth patch on tongue consists of two distinctly split, parallel rows of teeth, 2. Back slightly arched, more streamlined, 3. Stripes very distinct and most extend fully onto tail



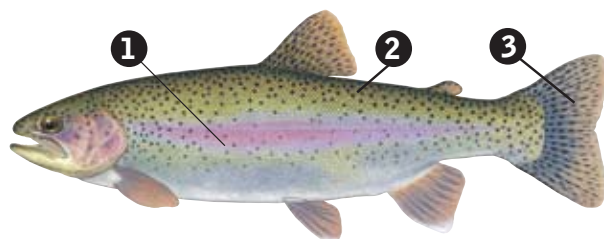
BROWN TROUT

1. Dark spots and orange or red spots with blue halos, 2. No spots on tail fin



WHITE BASS

1. Single tooth patch on tongue, 2. Back arched, 3. Stripes often faint and irregular



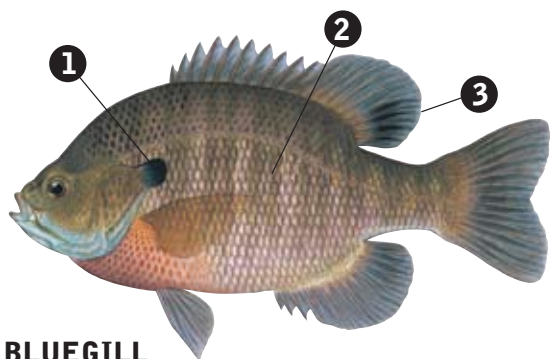
RAINBOW TROUT

1. Pink to red stripe on side, 2. Back and sides heavily speckled, 3. Spots on tail fin



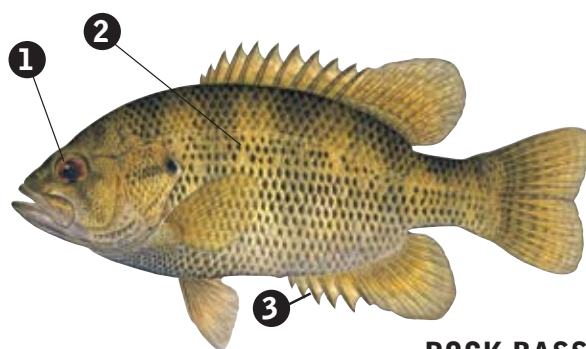
MUSKELLUNGE

1. Duck-like bill with sharp teeth, 2. No scales on lower half of cheek and gill flap



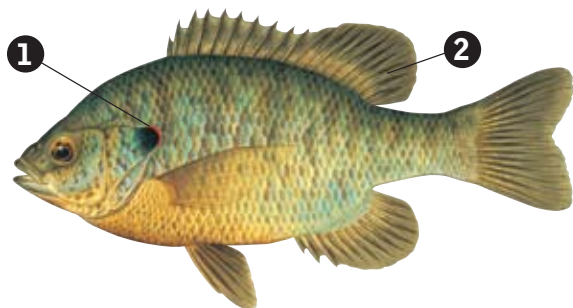
BLUEGILL

1. Gill flap black, 2. Vertical bars on side, 3. Dark blotch at rear of soft dorsal fin



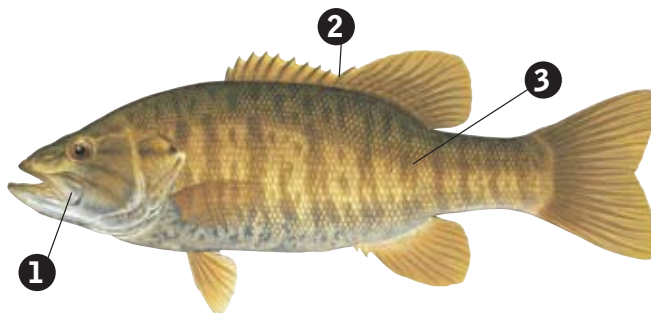
ROCK BASS

1. Eye rimmed in red, 2. Most scales have a dark spot, 3. Anal fin has five or six spines



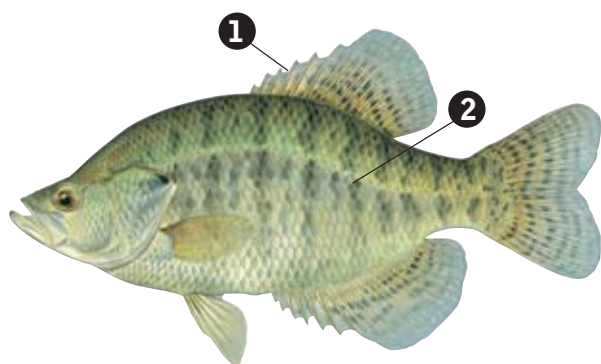
REDEAR SUNFISH

1. Gill flap black with orange or red margin, 2. No dark blotch at rear of soft dorsal fin



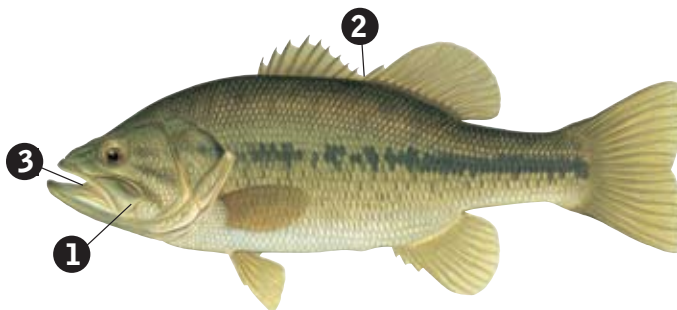
SMALLMOUTH BASS

1. Upper jaw does not extend beyond back of eye, 2. Shallow notch between dorsal fins, 3. Bronze colored with vertical bars on side



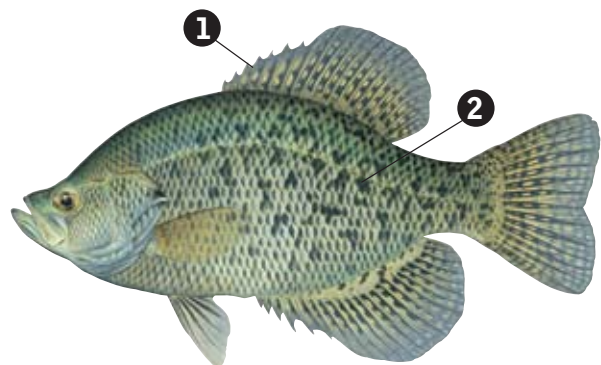
WHITE CRAPPIE

1. Dorsal fin has five or six spines, 2. Vertical bars on side



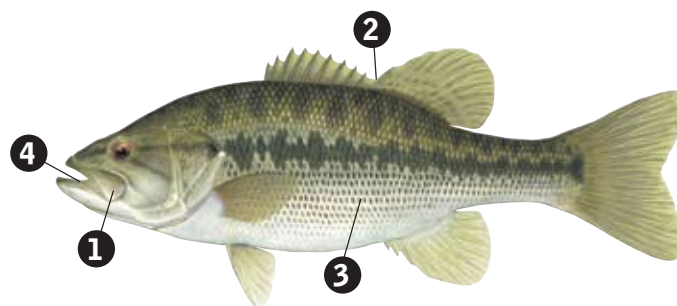
LARGEMOUTH BASS

1. Upper jaw extends beyond back of eye, 2. Dorsal fins separated by deep notch, 3. Tongue without tooth patch



BLACK CRAPPIE

1. Dorsal fin has seven or eight spines, 2. Irregular black blotches on side



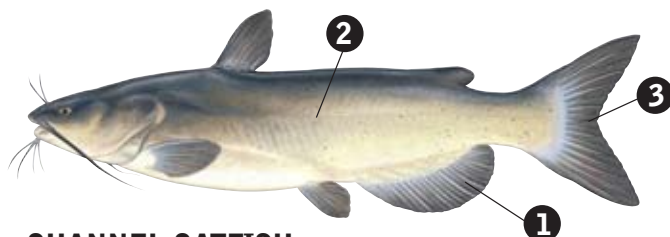
SPOTTED BASS

1. Upper jaw does not extend beyond back of eye, 2. Shallow notch between dorsal fins, 3. Rows of dark spots below lateral line, 4. Single tooth patch on tongue



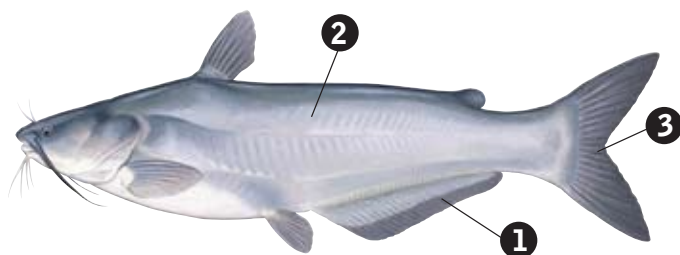
FLATHEAD CATFISH

1. Lower jaw projects far beyond upper jaw, 2. Tail fin not deeply forked, 3. Head is compressed on flathead catfish



CHANNEL CATFISH

1. Outer margin of anal fin rounded, with 24 to 29 rays, 2. Dark spots usually on body, 3. Tail fin deeply forked



BLUE CATFISH

1. Outer margin of anal fin straight, with 30 to 35 rays, 2. Body without dark spots, 3. Tail fin deeply forked

KENTUCKY THREATENED AND ENDANGERED FISHES

These four species of fish are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act. It is illegal to take these fish species and utilize them for any purpose including as live bait for fishing (see page 6).



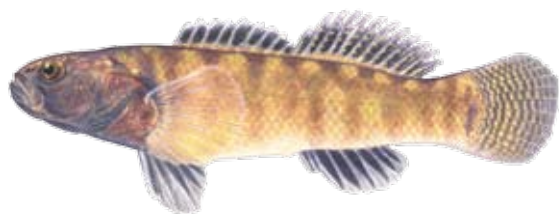
BLACKSIDE DACE

Found only in small (wadeable) streams in the Upper Cumberland River Basin including Letcher, Harlan, Bell, Whitley, Knox, McCreary, Pulaski and Laurel counties.



PALEZONE SHINER

Found only in the Little South Fork of the Cumberland River in McCreary and Wayne counties.



RELICT DARTER

Found only in the Bayou du Chien River in Hickman and Graves counties.



DUSKYTAIL DARTER

Found only in the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River in McCreary County.

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

It's the law

No live fish, live minnow, or live bait organisms not native or established in Kentucky shall be bought, sold, possessed, imported, or in any way used or released into Kentucky waters.

Sport anglers unintentionally and intentionally stock fish in Kentucky's public waters. These species mainly include gizzard shad and alewives that are present in several water bodies. Gizzard shad have been illegally released in several small public lakes where they previously were not present. They interfere with the lake's ability to support a quality bluegill population. Alewives are a non-native fish illegally stocked into several Kentucky lakes. The total impact of these fish is not known, but they are known to eat young fish, including sport fishes.

Additionally, there are many non-native aquatic species that invaded the country, particularly in Great Lake states. These include both plants and animals such as Eurasian watermilfoil, round goby, ruffe, spring water flea, and zebra mussels.



ASIAN CARP

Much like the zebra mussel and other non-native species introduced into Kentucky, two new species of Asian carp, the big head and silver, have invaded river systems in Kentucky, particularly the lower Ohio, Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Both of these species are plankton eaters and may exceed 50 pounds in size. Their impact on native species is not presently known, but they represent a competitive threat to other plankton eating fish such as our native paddlefish and most of our sport fish at early life stages.

These species are probably spawning in these river systems and their young can be easily mistaken as shad or skipjack herring. **All bait collectors using cast or dip nets, especially from Kentucky and Barkley tailwaters, should never dispose of any live bait into other water bodies due to the potential threat of spreading these aquatic nuisance species.**

HELP KEEP OUT NON-NATIVE SPECIES

- **CLEAN** your boat and trailer before launching into or leaving any waterbody.
- **REMOVE** all plants and animals.
- **DRAIN** all water from bilges and livewells.
- **DISPOSE** of unwanted live bait on shore – **DO NOT STOCK THE LAKE!**
- **RINSE** your boat, trailer and equipment with high pressure hot water.
- **DRY** everything for at least five days.

...AND STOP LARGEMOUTH BASS VIRUS

Follow the same steps as above, with a few additional precautions:

- **DO NOT** move fish from one body of water to another.
- **RELEASE** bass as quickly as possible with a minimum of handling.
- **CONDUCT** fishing tournaments during the cooler months to minimize stress on bass.
- **REPORT** dead or dying fish to your local District Fisheries Biologist.

ZEBRA MUSSELS

Kentucky has zebra mussels present in our waters and are at nuisance levels in the Ohio River. They attach themselves to any solid submerged surface in a cluster, reproduce rapidly, and pose a serious threat to native freshwater mussel populations. These mussels have elongated pointed shells less than two inches long with a zebra like pattern of stripes. Zebra mussels can live 8 to 10 days out of water and can be transported to another water body while attached to a boat.



LARGEMOUTH BASS VIRUS (LMBV)

The largemouth bass virus may

cause death in largemouth bass. Largemouth bass virus is naturally occurring and so far is isolated in eastern states, including Kentucky.

The virus infects largemouth bass by transmission through water, contact with infected fish or by eating infected prey. Stress seems to trigger the deadly effects of the virus. High summer water temperature is the leading cause of largemouth bass virus fish kills. Although the virus may cause fish kills, infected fish may never show signs of the disease and live a normal life span. No fish kills in Kentucky have been attributed to the virus, but the potential still exists.

Largemouth bass virus affects mainly fish over 12 inches long. Dying fish struggle at the surface and have trouble remaining upright. Sores may be visible on infected fish, but these are caused by secondary infections of bacteria or fungi.

VHS VIRUS

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) has been identified in common fish species in the Great Lakes states. Die-offs have been documented in crappie, bluegill, smallmouth bass, freshwater drum, and muskellunge. Officials also detected the virus in white bass, walleye and some sucker species. Movement of fish from infected waters is a possible pathway for the virus to infect Kentucky waters.

DO NOT TRANSFER fish or water from any water body to avoid movement of this pathogen. Symptoms of the virus include bulging eyes, bloated abdomens, inactive or over-active behavior and hemorrhaging in the eyes, skin, gills and at the base of the fins. The VHS virus is not harmful to humans. Any fish kills or sick fish should be reported to the fisheries division of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources at 1-800-858-1549.